THE

Weekly Comedy:

OR, THE

Humours of a *Coffee-House.*

Dramatis Perſonæ.

Levy, *a Recruiting Officer.*	Venture, *a Merchant.*	Double, *a Time-ſerver.*
Hazard, *a Gameſter.*	Talley, *a Stock-Jobber.*	Bays, *a Poet.*
Bite, *a Sharper.*	Querpo, *a Quack.*	Log, *a Mariner.*
Nice, *a Beau.*	Trick, *a Lawyer.*	Harlem, *a News-writer.*
Blunt, *a Plain-Dealer.*	Grim, *an Aſtrologer.*	Guzzle, *a Hard Drinker.*
Whim, *a Projector.*	Froth, *a Punſter.*	Bohee, *the Coffee-man.*

Note, Theſe Perſons are introduc'd only as occaſion ſerves.

From **Wednesday** September the 17th, to **Wednesday** September the 24th, 1707.

Enter Double, Blunt, *and* Harlem.

Double. BLeſs us! Gentlemen, did you ever know ſuch a Stagnation of Affairs at the Cloſe of a Campaign? Methinks all things ſeem as Sickly and as Silent as if all *Chriſtendom* was ſtruck Dumb with a Fit of an *Apoplexy.*

Blunt. Our *News-Papers*, I confeſs, are not ſtuff'd with ſo many Fruitleſs *Shams* and Ridiculous *Conjectures* as they us'd to be: So, I ſuppoſe, you *Newsmongers* think there can be nothing in Agitation if there be nothing in Print.

Harlem. Were any thing ſtirring it could not eſcape me; my Correſpondence is ſo infallible, and my Intelligence ſo ſpeedy, that I can ſcarce allow the *Government* to have a Minutes ſtart of me.

Double. Then pray what does your Bird whiſtle from Abroad? I have been upon the enquiry this three Weeks, and have as long defer'd my Writing into the Country, becauſe I can pick up nothing that will recommend my Letters to Juſtice *Whipbeggar*'s reading; for

if any Body in the Pariſh receives any News from *London*, and refuſes to give his Worſhip a Peruſal of the ſame, he is ready to believe they hold a *Jacobite* Correſpondence; and that they are enter'd into ſome *Popiſh* Plot, in order to Blow up *Preſbytery*.

Blunt. Prithee amuſe him with any thing that you think will pleaſe him; for, I'll warrant you, if he loves Novelty ſo much, he is one of thoſe *Infatuated Noddies* that would ſwallow a *Sham-Victory*, as greedily as a Gallon of his own *March Beer*, eſpecially if you do but aſcribe the Honour to Prince *Eugene*.

Harlem. I confeſs my News-Budget is ſo empty at preſent, that I have not ſo much as a ſcrap of wonderful Succeſs to pleaſure a Friend withal, that I can warrant for a Truth; but I have a Flying Report or two that I had from the Hands of ſome peculiar Perſons of known *Piety* and *Probity*; if you think, Mr. *Double*, they will be welcome to your Country Friend, I ſhall be glad to oblige you.

Double. Firſt let me hear, and then I can judge. If it be but a bare Probability in favour of the Cauſe, that will but adminiſter Comfort to the Brethren, it's no matter whether *Mary Jones* of the *Savoy* gives it the Sanction of her Name or no; for it ought to be a Maxim among all Lovers of their Country, (*viz.*) *That Good News, tho' it's falſe, is better than Bad that is true.*

Blunt. I'll Swear you'd make an excellent *Polititian* to Eſtabliſh *Satan*'s Kingdom. Lying, I think, already has gain'd too much the aſcendancy of Truth, therefore we need not Coin Maxims to teach People to deceive themſelves with pleaſing Falſities, the *Devil* will do that faſt enough without your aſſiſtance. —— But pray, Mr. *Harlem*, let's hear your News? I queſtion not but you'll take care to obſerve Mr. *Double*'s Maxim.

Harlem. Not I, upon my Word; but if Intelligence happens to come falſe to me, I always give it as I receive it, that is, without Confirmation; but this, that I am about to Communicate, was ſent to one out of the North of *England*, which very Letter, if you pleaſe, I'll read to you.

Double. By all means, Sir, if you'll give your ſelf the trouble.

Harlem. Reads.

Newcaſtle upon *Tine*, *Sept.* 18, 1707.

THis Day, early in the Morning, came into our Harbour from the Port of Harwich, *the Good Ship the* Abraham *and* Sarah, Aminidab Queer, *Maſter, who Reports, upon the Solemn Affirmation of a* Quaker, *That being under Sail upon the* Suffolk *Coaſt, the Fifteenth of the preſent Inſtant, as he paſs'd* Dunwich *Point, and was entering* S'would *Bay, the Wind at S. W. and by W. he made, a little before Night, at a conſiderable diſtance, ſix Sail of large Ships Scouting upon our Coaſt, which, by the help of his Proſpective, he judg'd to be* French *Men of War; and being loth to Steer into the Shore near enough to Cape* Anchor, *for fear the Enemy ſhould ſend their Boats to bring him off, or Fire him in the Night, he thought it moſt adviſable to back his Sails, and lie by for half an Hour, in which time he knew it muſt be quite dark, and that they could not come up with him being Right a head: Having reſolved upon theſe Meaſures, and remembring he had a ſmall Cargo of* Lanthorns *on Board, for the uſe of the* Miners *that Labour in the* Cole-Pits, *he wiſely bethought himſelf of an admirable Project for his further ſafety; and obſerving the Dictates of the Spirit, call'd all his Men upon Deck, and told them,* That the Light within

within him had inſpir'd him with a way how the outward Light, by the help of G——d, might ſave them from the Hands of a Cruel Enemy : *So Commanded every Man on Board to ſtock the* Lanthorns *with lighted* Candles *between Decks, then to put on their Watch-Coats, and when they had ſo done, to be ready upon the Word of Command to run up the Ratlings, with as many* Lanthorns *as every one could well hide under his Frize Jerkin, and when they had handſomely diſpers'd themſelves thro' all parts of the Rigging, when the Word was given, that all at once ſhould ſet up a hideous Shrieking and Yelling, and every Man be ready at the ſame time to Laſh his* Lanthorns *to the* Shrouds; *and that the* Cook *ſhould have a Rowſing Fire in the* Cook-Room, *which he was to feed with* Tar *by whole Ladle-fulls as ſoon as the Alarm was given, that it might ſtink and ſmother thro' the Funnels and Gratings of the* Fore-Caſtle : *When all things were in readineſs according to Order, it proving a very Dark and Hazy Night, Captain* Aminidab *makes all the Sail he could, and never altering his Courſe Steers boldly on till he found himſelf among the Enemy, upon which he Roars thro' his Speaking-Trumpet, being the Notice they had agreed upon, which was immediately ſeconded by the hideous Cries and Squallings of the whole Ships Crew, all appearing of a Blaze at one inſtant of time from Stem to Stern, and as high as the very Croſs-Trees of every Maſt, the Tar riſing from the Fore-Caſtle in ſuch Clouds of Smoke which ſoon reach'd the Noſes of that part of the Enemy which happen'd to be to Leward, ſo that the French being under a terrible Conſternation, ſometimes thought her to be a Ship on Fire, at othertimes took her to be Old Nick's Pleaſure-Boat, and that the Devil was riding Admiral along the* Britiſh *Coaſt, & that ſhe was* Charon's *Ferry-Boat laden with* Engliſh Moderators *for the Infernal Territories, ſo that the Enemy being dazzled with the Light, frighted with the Shreiks, and ſmother'd with the Smoke, three Sail that were to Leward of the* Quaker, *amidſt of their ſurprize, run aſhore at a Town in* Suffolk, *call'd* Cove Eye, *and the other three that were to Windward, fled away to* Dunkirk *as if the Devil drove 'em, ſo that* Aminidab *taking in his Horns when he was paſt Danger, proceeded to* Newcaſtle *without further Moleſtation, ſuſtaining no other Damage than the waſte of a few Candles, which is all at preſent from thy Loving Friend in the Truth*

Azariah Fudgewell.

Double. I find nothing in this but what is very probable. —— This will be as rare a piece of *News* for my Brother in the Country, to Amuſe Juſtice *Whip-Beggar* with, that ever could have been thought of; this will command a good Dinner, and a ſwinging Doſe of *March*-Beer, or elſe the Devils in't; and every Neighbour is more welcome that brings him *News*, than a Tenant is that comes to pay him his *Rent*.

Blunt. I hope you are not ſuch a couple of *Infatuated Noddies*, as to give any Credit to ſuch a ridiculous Story.

Harlem. I will not be ſo forward as to affirm it for a *Truth*; but I aſſure you the Account I have read to you is from one of the Toppingeſt *Quakers* in *Newcaſtle.*

Double. I proteſt, I can ſee nothing in it but what a Man that is well affected to *News*, may believe as heartily as he does his *Creed.*

Blunt. A Man like your ſelf, I ſuppoſe you mean, that has vary'd his Faith to all the Points of the *Compaſs*, and that can form a Conſcience to believe any thing that's agreeable to his Intereſt. —— As for my part, I Credit not a Word of it, but look upon it to be a Fable, contriv'd, purpoſely, by ſome Arch *Wag*, to impoſe upon Mr. *Harlem*, that he may do the like by the *Publick.*

Harlem.

Harlem. No, no, Sir, you are much miſtaken; *Shams* never paſs with me: I have a *Touch-Stone* at Home by which I try my *Intelligence*, before ever I *Publiſh* it.

Double. Pray why did you not try this? And then you would have been able to have given us a true Eſtimate of the matter, and whether it be *True* or *Falſe*.

Harlem. I have done it, and find it of too courſe an Allay, or elſe you would have found it in my *News-Paper*; but I never introduce any thing there but what is ſuch *True Standard*, that it comes up to the *Truth*.

Blunt. The *Father of Lies* fetch thee; I believe I have detected as many *Falſities* in your *Infallible Hodge-Podge*, as there are in *Glanvil's Witches*, or *Fox's Books of Martyrs*; and to ſay you give us nothing but *Truth*, is ſuch a piece of *Impudence* that an *Iriſh Evidence* would ſcarce be Guilty of.

Double. Pray, Mr. *Blunt*, don't be ſo warm upon Mr. *Harlem.* All Men, you know, that write *News-Papers*, are forc'd to take abundance of things upon other People's Credit, and therefore muſt Err ſometimes, in ſpight of *Care* or *Judgment*.

Harlem. Mr. *Blunt* is too *Paſſionate* to conſider things rightly; I do not mean that I never Reported in my *Paper* any thing that was *Falſe*, but that I never confirm'd any thing to be *True*, that I knew in *Reality* to be a *Lye*.

Blunt. But, pray, where's your *Touch-Stone* then, if you cannot diſtinguiſh *Truth* from *Falſhood* before you expoſe it to the *Publick?* —— In ſhort, *Almanack-Predictors*, and *Time-Serving News-Papers*, are always forc'd to keep pace with the *Party* that is uppermoſt, and what the one Propheſies, or the other Reports, are no more to be heeded than the Pratling of a *Parrot*; for none of 'em ſay any thing but what they are taught by their Maſters.

Double. O Dear, Sir! I fancy you muſt be very much miſtaken; for I have known ſome *News-Writers* Proſecuted by the *People-Plaguers* for not conforming their Accounts to the *General Standard*.

Harlem. So have I to my Sorrow. Pray what can you ſay to that, Sir?

Blunt. That's only when *Unfortunate Truths* appear too Naked, and therefore ſerves to make my Argument good; for he that ſets up for a *News-Writer*, and does not take his Leſſon from the Grand *Supervisor* of that *Faculty*, deſerves to be Whipp'd.

Double. I believe I underſtand you; but after all, I have a mighty Affection for *News*: A Man generally finds ſomething or other in it that chears a Man's Spirits, and gives *Nature* as good a Fillip as a Dram of *Brandy*.

Harlem. Aye, aye, ſo it does, Mr. *Double*; let Mr. *Blunt* think as he pleaſes, I ſay *News* is a great Advantage to *Trade*; an Improvement of *Mens Knowledge*; a Diverſion to the *Publick*; and the moſt Vendible Commodity in the whole *Kingdom*. Therefore, why ſhould any Man ſpeak againſt it?

Blunt. As for its Sale I allow you're in the right; for one *News-Paper* out-Sells twenty *Sermons*, which ſhews the *Corruption* of the Age ſo very great, that the People are more delighted with a Pack of *Mercenary Shams*, than with the Doctrine of *Chriſtianity*; which I think is no great Credit to ſo *Pious* a Nation, that ſquabbles ſo much about *Religion*.

Double. Alas! Reading of a little Innocent *News*, I cannot conceive to be any hinderance to *Devotion*.

Harlem. It rather furthers it; do not we thank God for Good *News*, and pray againſt Bad? Now, if we had no *News*, we ſhould quite forget our ſelves.

Blunt. It ſerves for nothing, as I ſee, but to cauſe *Diſputes*; widen *Diviſions*; promote *Wagers*, heighten *Animoſities*; and to draw the *Common People* from their *Buſineſs*, to lye Sotting in *Ale-Houſes*, to the Starving of their *Families*; nay worſe, for it has often been a means of decoying Men into *Parties*, and next into *Plots*; Witneſs the laſt Dying Words of Mr. *Waid* of *Briſtol*, who being Executed for the *Rye-Houſe Conſpiracy*, declar'd at the Gallows, *That giving himſelf up to the Reading and Hunting after* News, *was the Principal Error that firſt led him into that Diſobedience that had brought him to this unhappy End.* —— So, Gentlemen, Farewel.

Harlem. Had you time to hear, I could give you a ſmart return. —— But I'll defer it till our next meeting, ſince you are running in ſuch haſte.

Double. Let's all be going, for I have talk'd away my time till I am paſt my Minute.

[*Exeunt.*]

Advertiſement.

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